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Book Review

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Neurovascular Surgery, Second Edition

Thieme Publishers New York/Stuttgart, 2015
1280 p., 1904 illustrations, Hardback
EUR 349.99/USD 399.99
ISBN 978-1604067590

We had the pleasure to get acquainted with the book 'Neurovascular Surgery,' edited by the group from the Barrow Neurological Institute. The list of authors comprises a hybrid of both established leaders in the field and also specialized younger authors. The book not only covers 'open' surgical approaches but also accounts for the expanding fields of endovascular and neurointerventional techniques. The viewpoint is multi-disciplinary, and scientific evidence is the basis of recommendations, whenever possible.

The book – despite its impressive extent of >1,200 pages (4.48 kg weight) – achieves to catch the readers right away and takes them into the depths of the subject. The book is divided into 10 sections with a total of 99 chapters. The first 100 pages cover developmental, anatomical and physiological aspects of the neurovascular system. The second section deals with clinical, anaesthesiological and operative aspects of neurovascular surgery, including information on advanced techniques such as intraoperative cardiac arrest and hypothermia that most readers will rarely apply during their career, but which stimulates one to think outside the box. On the first 200 pages, the editors manage to cover the broad field of ischemic stroke, its pathophysiology and up-to-date treatment. The subjects here range from 'classical' topics such as carotid endarterectomy to recent trials on endovascular mechanical intervention for stroke. Section 4 covers cavernous malformations of the nervous system. It is a pleasure to follow those well-illustrated chapters. Section 5 is the largest, covering all aspects of the intracranial aneurysm disease. Possibilities and limits of both open surgical and endovascular techniques are juxtaposed for the most common aneurysm locations. The discussion whether or not an unruptured intracranial aneurysm needs to be treated or not – one of the most controversially discussed topics in vascular neurosurgery – is worth reading. Another 200 pages cover cerebral and spinal arteriovenous fistulae and malformations, again keeping good balance between surgical, endovascular and radiosurgical treatment options. Sections 7 and 8 deal with neurovascular conflict syndromes and treatment considerations of vascularized cerebral or spinal tumours, respectively. The ninth section covers surgical approaches and strategies, likewise elaborating on endoscope-assisted and keyhole vascular surgery. The last section is dedicated to cerebral revascularization surgery.

Altogether, the book manages to cover a wide range of topics without losing depth and detail. It is generously well illustrated with explanatory and didactic images, sketches and high-quality photos from surgery, which allows nonspecialized readers to visualize and conceptualize. The editors succeeded to limit redundancy to a minimum, to provide a remarkably homogenous array of tables and figures, and to use a common terminology, despite this oeuvre being a multi-author textbook with contributions from all continents. All chapters are well referenced and include the latest trials that happened up to Spring 2015. Despite the editors' strong microsurgical background, the content of the book is not biased towards surgery, but covers endovascular and radiosurgical treatment options to adequate extents. For the sake of completeness, it might have been beneficial to dedicate an additional section of the book to neurological rehabilitation and neuropsychological aspects of neurovascular diseases.

The video material that comes with the book comprises both computer simulations and clinical material and it is adequately presented. In our opinion, however, the anatomical computer animations of basic anatomy were dispensable. We would have favoured to find more interesting pathologies added to the list of clinical cases.

We will likely refer to this book in the future when confronted with patients harbouring challenging pathologies. It is a valuable add-on to the libraries of experienced neurovascular surgeons and interventional neuroradiologists and also to neurologists, critical care physicians, and rehabilitators. The authors are to be commended for providing a first-class reference on the subject.

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